

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, of listings, of claims in this application.

In the Notice of Non-Compliant Amendment, it was indicated that claim 3 was labeled "(currently amended)." This was corrected to state "(withdrawn)." All other claim amendments presented here are the same as those originally submitted in the response filed on January 11, 2005.

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended) A hygienic absorbent article comprising:

a main body including a back layer and an absorbent layer having two side edges extending in a longitudinal direction of the article and laid on the back layer;

a three-dimensional portion extending in the longitudinal direction of the article and provided over the absorbent layer and including two connecting portions allowed to rise from two fixed ends, where the three-dimensional portion being is fixed at two fixed ends thereof onto the main body, the fixed ends being located between the two side edges of the absorbent layer, the three-dimensional portion including two connecting portions to rise from the fixed ends and a skin-contacting contactable portion extending between from upper ends of the connecting portions to have a pair of free ends, each free end being located closer to corresponding one of the side edges of the absorbent layer than the fixed end, both the fixed ends and the free ends being located over the absorbent layer, at least an upper face of the skin-contacting portion the three-dimensional portion being formed made of a liquid-permeable material, which is folded back upon itself at the individual free ends; and

a plurality of elastic members disposed between and fixed to confronting faces of the folded liquid-permeable sheet and extending provided in the three-dimensional portion to extend in the longitudinal direction of the article for applying a longitudinal elastic contractive force to the three-dimensional portion so that the three-dimensional portion is allowed to rise to have with the free ends of the skin-contacting contactable portion spaced above the main body while being anchored at the fixed ends to the main body,

wherein at least two elastic members are located at the free ends and at least two elastic members are spaced inward from the elastic members located at the free ends.

Claim 2 (canceled).

Claim 3 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein a hydrophilic material layer is provided in at least one of the connecting portion and the skin-contacting portion.

Claim 4 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer is provided on an outer face of the back layer for preventing dislocation of the article during use.

Claim 5 (currently amended): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein the skin-contactingcontactable portion is to be fitted between the labia of a female genital organ when the hygienic absorbent article is worn.

Claim 6 (original): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 5, which is allowed to be retained on the body of a wearer by closing force of the labia, without providing any pressure-sensitive adhesive for preventing dislocation of the article during use on an outer face of the back layer.

Claim 7 (original): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 5, wherein the three-dimensional portion has a length of 50 to 70 mm in the longitudinal direction of the article and a width of 20 to 40 mm between the free ends thereof in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

Claim 8 (original): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 5, wherein the main body has a length of 80 to 120 mm in the longitudinal direction of the article and a width of 40 to 60 mm in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

9 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, the main body further comprises a liquid-permeable surface layer covering the absorbent layer, and the three-dimensional portion is fixed at the fixed ends thereof on the surface layer.

Claim 10 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article comprising: a main body including a back layer and an absorbent layer having two side edges extending in a longitudinal direction of the article and laid on the back layer; first and second three-dimensional portions extending in the longitudinal direction of the article and symmetrically provided over the absorbent layer with respect to a longitudinally extending centerline of the absorbent layer, the first and second three-dimensional portions being fixed at fixed ends thereof onto the main body, the fixed ends being located between the two side edges of the absorbent layer, each three-dimensional portion including a connecting portion to rise from the fixed end and a skin-contacting portion bent from the connecting portion outwardly to have a free end located closer to corresponding one of the side edges of the absorbent layer than the fixed end, at least an upper face of the skin-contacting portion being made of a liquid-permeable material; and elastic members provided in the first and second three-dimensional portions to extend in the longitudinal direction of the article for applying a longitudinal elastic contractive force to the first and second three-dimensional portion so that the first and second three-dimensional portions are allowed to rise to have the free ends of the skin-contacting portions spaced above the main body while being anchored at the fixed ends to the main body.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, wherein the first three-dimensional portion is formed from a first sheet extending over the absorbent layer from one side edge of the absorbent layer; and the second three-dimensional portion is formed from a second sheet extending over the absorbent layer from the other side edge of the absorbent layer.

Claim 12 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, wherein the connecting portion of the first three-dimensional portion and the connecting portion of the second three-dimensional portion are joined at least partially.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, wherein the fixed end of the first three-dimensional portion and the fixed end of the second three-dimensional portion are spaced apart in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction by no more than 1/2 of the distance between the two side edges of the absorbent layer.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, wherein the first and second three-dimensional portions are formed from a single liquid-permeable sheet to have a common fixed end.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, wherein in each of the first and second three-dimensional portions, a hydrophilic material layer is provided in at least one of the connecting portion and the skin-contacting portion.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 12, wherein a hydrophilic material layer is provided between the connecting portion of the first three-dimensional portion and the connecting portion of the second three-dimensional portion.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, wherein a pressure-sensitive adhesive layer is provided on an outer face of the back layer for preventing dislocation of the article during use.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, wherein the skin-contacting portions are to be fitted between the labia of a female genital organ when the hygienic absorbent article is worn.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 18, which is allowed to be retained on the body of a wearer by closing force of the labia, without providing any pressure-sensitive adhesive for preventing dislocation of the article during use on an outer face of the back layer.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 18, wherein the three-dimensional portions have a length of 50 to 70 mm in the longitudinal direction of the article and a width of 20 to 40 mm between the free ends thereof in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 18, wherein the main body has a length of 80 to 120 mm in the longitudinal direction of the article and a width of 40 to 60 mm in a direction perpendicular to the longitudinal direction.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 10, the main body further comprises a liquid-permeable surface layer covering the absorbent layer, and the three-dimensional portions are fixed at the fixed ends thereof on the surface layer.

Claim 23 (new): A hygienic absorbent article as set forth in claim 1, wherein the three-dimensional portion is fixedly folded entirely to the main body at longitudinal ends of the main body so that the three-dimensional portion does not rise at the longitudinal ends.